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AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921.

The Library Assistant

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

VOL. XV.

EDITED BY HENRY A. SHARP, F.L.A.
(Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon).

No. 19.

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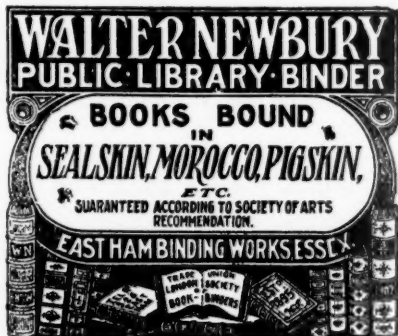
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The Library Assistant :

The Official Journal of the Library Assistants' Association.

No. 277.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921.

Published Monthly

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

NORTH-WESTERN BRANCH.

The **Seventh Annual Meeting** will be held at the Liverpool Reference Library, William Brown Street (through the kindness of George T. Shaw, Esq., Chief Librarian), on **Wednesday, October 19th**. The following programme will be carried out:—

3 to 5 p.m.—Visits to Branch Libraries by motor.

5 to 6 p.m.—**Tea** (to be provided by the Liverpool and District Division).

6 p.m.—**Annual Meeting** in the **Hornby Library**, William Brown Street.

Agenda.

Adoption of Annual Report.

Election of Officers and Council.

Address by the incoming President: **Mr. E. C. Wickens** (Liverpool Public Libraries), Vice-President of the L.A.A.

Discussion.

A very cordial invitation is extended to all Assistants (whether members of the L.A.A. or not) to attend this meeting. A detailed programme will be circulated in due course.

Members and friends who intend to be present are requested to notify me not later than Friday, October 14th.

REGINALD G. WILLIAMS.

Honorary Secretary.

Central Lending Library,
Bolton.

Election of Officers and Council.

Nominations for the Vice-Presidency (who must be a Bolton and District member), Honorary Secretaryship, and nine members of the Bolton and District Division, and nine members of the Liverpool and District Division, should reach the Honorary Secretary (Mr. Reginald G. Williams), Central Lending Library, Bolton, not later than Monday, September 26th, 1921.

EDITORIAL.

The Inaugural Meeting.—Will members kindly note that the inaugural meeting of the new session will be held at Stoke Newington on Wednesday, 12th October, and that the address will be delivered by J. C. Squire, Esq., M.A., the editor of "*The London Mercury*." In view of the occasion and of the position held by the gentleman who is to address the meeting, the Council hopes that members will make the meeting widely known; and that all who are interested in libraries and good literature will make an effort to attend. Fuller particulars will appear in our next issue.

The Forthcoming Session.—The programme of monthly meetings for the forthcoming session is in course of preparation, and members who are willing to read papers on professional subjects are asked to communicate as early as possible with the Honorary Secretary of the Education Committee, Mr. Ernest Luke, Public Library, Plumstead, S.E.18.

Library Association Council Election.—It is pleasing to record that of the ten candidates recommended for support in our last issue all have secured seats on the Council except Messrs. Hogg, Bolton and Sharp. We are particularly glad to know that the Honorary Secretary secured much support, as we have always held that he should occupy a seat on the older association by virtue of his office.

The December Examinations.—In case it is not generally known, we take this opportunity of announcing that the Library Association will hold examinations in all sections in December. Particulars as to the essays set, etc., will appear almost immediately.

Three Current Advertisements.—We have referred elsewhere to the fact that we do not regard the salary offered by the Sheffield Libraries Committee (£300 a year) for a deputy librarian, as sufficient in view of the importance of the position. In our opinion, it ought to be more if a good man is really desired. It is a pity too that the Gloucester County Council cannot see its way to offer *at least* the £250 a year which is the minimum salary suggested by the Carnegie U.K. Trust for a rural librarian, instead of a paltry £200. The Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees requires a "lady" librarian for £150 a year. The "lady" must be acquainted with the working of the open access system, and hold recognised librarian's qualifications. We see from "*The Municipal Year*

Book" that Thornaby draws its gas supply from Stockton. It might do worse than draw its library facilities from the same place or some other.

Mr. F. Meaden Roberts.—Our readers will be sorry to learn that Mr. F. Meaden Roberts, of Whitechapel, an Honorary Fellow of the L.A.A., has been seriously ill. We offer him our sympathy, and trust that he will soon regain his usual health and vigour.

The School of Librarianship.—Attention is drawn to the announcement which appears in this issue to the effect that the School of Librarianship will enter upon its third session in October. It is hoped that as many assistants as are able will give the School the support it deserves. Special emphasis is laid on the fact that it provides facilities for those who are studying for the Library Association's Examinations as well as for those organized by the School itself.

Mr. F. W. T. Lange.—Members of the Association will be sorry to hear of the retirement of Mr. Lange from the librarianship of St. Bride's. In many ways not generally known to members, Mr. Lange has proved a real and practical friend to the Association, and his generosity in handing over the whole of his professional library to us is known to all. We wish him happiness in his retirement, and hope that there may be still many years of useful service before him. We confess that in these supposedly enlightened days we are ashamed to learn from *The City Press* that "Mr. Lange's resignation . . . is due not to any desire to cease working in the field which he has occupied so many years, but to the drastic curtailments which have been found necessary in connection with the libraries."

Librarianship in South Africa.—The Honorary Treasurer has received an interesting letter from Mr. F. W. Cooper, the progressive librarian and secretary of the Port Elizabeth Public Library. He tells us that the library movement is making great strides, and that there are few villages which fail to take advantage of the £ for £ system, which applies to all small libraries, and is consequently giving an impetus to the provision of reading facilities in the rural districts. The larger libraries do not benefit in quite this way, but nevertheless receive substantial government and municipal grants. The Port Elizabeth Library Committee has recently revised its salaries scale, and it is interesting to note that it is based on the scale drawn up by the L.A.A. last year.

PROCEEDINGS.

The Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting was held on Wednesday, 8th June. At 3.15 p.m., a party of about 50 members and friends of the L.A.A. was met on the steps of the British Museum by Messrs. Arundel J. Esdaile, B.A., and H. Sellers, M.A., of the Library Staff, and were conducted through the King's Library, where bibliographical treasures of various kinds were pointed out and learnedly commented upon in passing. Those for whom the history of books possesses any attraction whatever must necessarily grieve at the short time available for examining these great examples, and resolves are made for subsequent visits with more leisure, but alas! how seldom these materialise! Moreover, much of the charm is lost when there is no guide dwelling lovingly on the points of interest. After the King's Library comes admittance to the inner sanctuaries where the practical librarianship—so different in character from that of the average visitor's experience—is carried on: cataloguing rooms, checking rooms, etc., all of which it is a privilege to see; then on to the wonderful Iron Library, which never fails to make its impression. Lastly, there is the view from the gallery across the vast Reading Room, a truly remarkable sight whether regarded bibliographically or architecturally. After traversing more of the seemingly endless book-lined galleries and passages, the party finally emerges in one of the Roman Galleries, passing rapidly to the entrance hall, where the L.A.A. President—Mr. Cashmore—in happy phrase tenders thanks to the guides for their courtesy, interest and kindness. The Library Staff of our great National Museum has ever been very considerate to the aspirations of the L.A.A., and the Association is again indebted to Mr. Pollard and his colleagues for an extremely interesting and instructive occasion.

After tea an adjournment was made to the London School of Economics, where permission to hold the business meeting had been given by Sir William Beveridge.

The chair was occupied by the President (Mr. H. M. Cashmore), supported by the Vice-President (Mr. J. D. Stewart), the Honorary Secretary (Mr. G. P. Jones) and Mr. B. M. Headicar (librarian at the London School of Economics).

On behalf of the Association, Mr. Cashmore tendered thanks to the authorities of the School for permission to meet there, and in particular to Mr. Headicar, an original member of the Association and always a good friend to it. In a few remarks on the future of libraries, Mr. Headicar said that we must confess that there had not been the impetus that there ought to have been in the past, and if the library movement was going to become what we would all like to see it become, then the energy and impetus must come from the younger generation of library workers.

Regarding the functions of libraries, he thought we should be agreed that they were not, as some would tell us, purely and simply educational, although at the same time we recognized that there should be close co-operation between libraries and education. Speaking of the control of libraries he was emphatically of opinion that they would be best managed by a committee made up of members of the library committee, of members of the local authority and of members of neither. By this means we should get proper consideration given to the desires of every member of the community. He would also like to see a centralised library authority for every county in the country, with the free and unrestricted use by residents of all the libraries within that area. More than all else, it was high

time that the adoption of the Libraries' Acts should be made compulsory and not left to local option.

The Minutes of the Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting were read and confirmed, and the President moved the adoption of the Twenty-sixth Annual Report as printed in the June issue of *The Library Assistant*. Its adoption was seconded by the Honorary Secretary, and carried. In moving its adoption, the President outlined the special points in the Report, and reviewed the professional happenings of the past year in so far as assistants were concerned. The adoption of the financial Statement was moved by the Honorary Treasurer (Mr. J. F. Hogg) and seconded by Mr. R. Cooper.

The Honorary Secretary then announced the result of the ballot for Officers and Council for the ensuing year, as printed in our last issue. Thereupon the incoming President, Mr. J. D. Stewart, took the chair and was received with acclamation by the meeting. In a few words he thanked the Association for the honour it had done him in electing him to the Office, and expressed the Association's appreciation of the services rendered during the past year by the retiring President. In speaking of the work already accomplished by the Association, the President appealed to every assistant to back up the Council in its endeavours to raise the status of librarianship, for he was convinced that although libraries might even yet have a trying ordeal to undergo, the time was not far distant when they would come into their own, and it was up to us to see that when they did come into their own the public library had the proper assistant, and to this end he would urge those present to do what they could to get the assistant properly interested in his work.

A resolution was moved by Mr. Hogg and adopted to the effect that members joining the Association in or after March of the Association's financial year should only be required to pay half the subscription for that year.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to a discussion on the proposed reorganisation of the Association, an outline of which appeared in our last issue.

A vote of thanks to the Officers and Council for their services during the past year was moved by Mr. J. E. Walker, and responded to by the Honorary Editor.

SOUTH COAST BRANCH.

The South Coast Branch held its ninth annual meeting in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, on Tuesday, July 12th. Prior to the meeting the Brighton Library Staff entertained the members to tea, Mr. A. Webb, Chairman of the Branch, presided.

The Honorary Secretary, Mr. E. Male, read the annual report, following which the newly-elected President, Mr. James Hutt, M.A., Chief Librarian, Portsmouth, addressed the meeting. Mr. Henry D. Roberts, M.B.E., Director of the Pavilion Estate, etc., entertained the gathering with a short sketch of the history of the Royal Pavilion.

Mr. W. Benson Thorne explained to the members the manner in which it is proposed shortly to re-construct the Association, and a long and critical discussion followed, those taking part being Mr. Hutt and Miss Page (Portsmouth), Miss Gerard (Worthing), and Messrs. Law, Webb, and Male (Brighton).

Mr. Thorne having replied to the various points raised, a successful meeting eventually closed with hearty votes of thanks to the President, to Mr. W. Benson Thorne, to Mr. Henry D. Roberts, and the staff of the Brighton Public Library.

ERNEST MALE, Hon. Sec.

(Ninth Annual Report, 1920-21).

The Committee have pleasure in presenting their Ninth Annual Report on the work of the Branch.

Membership. The present membership is 38, comprising 2 Fellows, 24 Members, and 12 Associate Members. This shows a decrease of 7 on last year's figures, chiefly attributable to a reduction of the Brighton Staff and to the regrettable desertion of the Association by several members of the Hove Staff.

Meetings. During the year meetings have been held at Portsmouth (Annual) July, 1920; Worthing, October, 1920; Brighton, February, 1921.

The meeting at Portsmouth was very well attended, as were also those at Worthing and Brighton. The one arranged to be held at Hove in May last, however, had eventually to be abandoned owing to very few members promising to attend following the curtailment of railway facilities due to the coal strike.

President. Miss M. Frost, Borough Librarian and Curator, Worthing, who has been Honorary President of the Branch for the past two years now vacates that office in favour of Mr. James Hutt, M.A., Borough Librarian, Portsmouth. Her interest in the Branch, however, will doubtless remain undiminished.

Honorary Treasurer.—Miss Gerard, who has been our Honorary Treasurer since the inception of the Branch has decided to relinquish that office. Her successor is Miss Dean of Worthing. The Committee feel that they cannot allow Miss Gerard to leave the office without expressing appreciation of the very able way she has carried out her duties during the last nine years, and especially during the war period when she coupled the duties of Honorary Secretary with those of Honorary Treasurer.

General.—Unfortunately a want of interest has been apparent amongst the members for some little time past. This lack of enthusiasm is much regretted by the Committee, who appeal to assistants of the area, notwithstanding the unsettled conditions obtaining generally, to take a more lively part in the affairs of their own Association, by coming to the meetings, and by offering papers or taking part in the debates.

In conclusion, the Committee desire once more to place on record their appreciation of the practical support shown the Association by the various library authorities who have so kindly provided facilities for the holding of their Branch meetings, and have offered hospitality to the members.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

ARTHUR WEBB, *Chairman.*

ERNEST MALE, *Honorary Secretary.*

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for year ending June 30th, 1921.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Balance in hand brought forward...				Proportion of Subscriptions remitted to Gen.			
Subscriptions received ...	12	8	0	Hon. Treas., L.A.A. ...	8	5	6
				Postage and petty disbursements ...	1	0	0
				Balance in hand...	6	4	11½
Total ...	15	10	5½	Total ...	15	10	5½

Audited and found correct. { W. LAW, } Hon. Auditors.
 { D. HARMAN, }

July 11th, 1921.

YORKSHIRE BRANCH.

The members of the Yorkshire Branch of the Library Assistants' Association, to the number of about thirty, visited Brighouse on Tuesday, June 1st, excellent arrangements having been made for their comfort and entertainment by Mr. J. A. Wroe, Borough Librarian. The visitors, who were the guests of Councillor W. Whiteley (Chairman of the Brighouse Library and Art Gallery Committee), and Councillor S. Helm (Vice-Chairman), met at Rydings Park, and were accorded a welcome by Councillor Whiteley, Mr. J. A. Butterfield (President of the Branch) speaking in response to the welcome.

Mr. Wroe then conducted the party round the Library and Art Gallery, and afterwards the visitors, along with members of the local Library Committee, proceeded to the Rastrick Branch Library, which was also inspected. A return was then made to the Municipal Offices, where members were entertained to tea. Before dispersing for a Branch Committee meeting Mr. Strother (Leeds) proposed a vote of thanks to Councillors Whiteley and Helm for their hospitality. This was seconded by Mr. Goulden (Huddersfield).

Councillor Whiteley, in reply, said he was pleased to have been present at the visit of the Branch to Brighouse, for it had been an education to him. It was a pleasure to him to entertain them on their first visit to the town.

Councillor Helm, J.P., said he was pleased that the members had appreciated their visit to Brighouse. He thought that library assistants were engaged in a very serious and important work. He held the opinion that there was nothing more important in England to-day than trying to inculcate into the minds of the people the habit of reading and the quality of books to read, as it tended to the making of life a very great pleasure. He hoped the members of the Association would continue their work of trying to get people to read, and then they would be doing a real service in making the country happy and contented.

A General Meeting was subsequently held in the Council Chamber, Mr. Butterfield (Bradford) occupying the chair. Mr. R. W. Parsons (Secretary) read a paper on "Desultory Reading," which had been prepared by Mr. E. Judson, of Bradford. Mr. Judson, among other things, touched upon the value of historical fiction as an aid to the study of history, briefly outlining the genesis of this class of fiction, and offering a few general criticisms of the works of individual writers. A lengthy discussion followed, contributed to by Messrs. Haigh (Halifax), Strother (Leeds), Goulden (Huddersfield), Robertshaw (Bradford), The President, Secretary, and Mr. Wroe (Borough Librarian). The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to Mr. Judson and Mr. Parsons, proposed by Mr. Strother, seconded by Mr. Goulden, and a vote of thanks to Mr. J. A. Wroe for his co-operation and efforts in making the meeting a successful one, proposed by Mr. Robertshaw, seconded by Mr. Haigh.

REPORT OF DELEGATE TO ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH COAST BRANCH.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE L.A.A.

DEAR SIR,—It being unfortunately inconvenient for Mr. Gurner Jones to attend, it became my privilege to be present at the recent Annual Meeting of the South Coast Branch. The event was held, by kind permission of that old and loyal friend of the L.A.A.—Mr. Henry D. Roberts—in the Pavilion, prior to which tea was hospitably arranged at a local restaurant. Mr. Arthur Webb presided at the business meeting and moved the adoption of the Annual

Report, which was seconded by Mr. Ernest Male, and carried after being discussed. Mr. Webb then invited Mr. James Hutt, M.A., Chief Librarian of Portsmouth, who had been elected President for the ensuing year, to take the Chair, to which he was generously welcomed. Mr. Hutt narrated some of his experiences in connection with the L.A.A. and commended the Association to all those assistants who took pride in their work and wished to make advancement. Mr. Roberts was able to spare a few minutes to visit the meeting, during which he entertained those present with a delightful informal account of the Pavilion buildings and their history, the interlude being much enjoyed. At this point I was asked to introduce the new scheme for the reconstruction of the Association, and the subsequent discussion was entered into with such zest that it had to be concluded after an adjournment to the Library, the room in which the meeting was held being required by another Society.

Considering the many difficulties with which members have to contend, the meeting was well supported; special mention should be made of the Portsmouth "contingent," including Mr. Hutt, Miss Page and others, who made a two and a half hours' railway journey each way, at no small expenses in order to be present. Such enthusiasm is highly praiseworthy, and members more fortunately situated should reflect on the self-sacrifice entailed in these circumstances, and be more readily prepared to support the Association in its efforts to improve facilities wherever possible. It means a very considerable amount of hard work and organisation, as well as keen interest, to maintain the progress of a Branch situated in the position of the South Coast Branch where travelling facilities are anything but convenient or cheap; meetings necessarily cannot be frequent, though if road transport continues development at its present rate, there may be possibilities ahead. Much credit is due to the Officers and Committee of the Branch that in the face of difficulty and some discouragement they so faithfully adhere to their purpose. My own view is that, however small meetings may be, they are always worth while; so long as a few can have opportunity for gathering together and exchanging ideas, good cannot fail to result, and I believe the little band of devoted member, along the South Coast realise this and are determined to keep the fire alive. It may happen that members from London and other parts find themselves in some of these towns on occasion, and I feel sure that if they would call at the local Library to compare notes on Association affairs they would receive a welcome, and would at the same time be promoting that spirit of comradeship which is so desirable amongst members. In conclusion I should like to record my thanks to the Branch for a very cordial reception, as well as for kindly and unstinted hospitality.

Yours faithfully,

W. B. THORNE.

NEWS ITEMS.

The Council recently decided to subscribe to a Press Cuttings Agency with a view to securing all the published news relating to libraries in this country. As a consequence, we propose to include in this and future issues of *THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT* brief notes on such happenings in the library world as are likely to be of special interest to library assistants. We have seen a large number of cuttings already, and we believe that at no time in the history of public libraries has the press devoted so much sympathetic attention to the library

movement as it is doing just now. In view of this new feature, may we ask readers to send us any interesting news which may be of general appeal.

Junior Library Opened at Norwich.—The chairman of the Norwich Library Committee opened a properly equipped Junior library at Norwich in July, the success of which is assured under Mr. Stephen's wise guidance. We were gratified to notice that both the chairman and the Lady Mayoress paid graceful tributes to the work of Mr. Stephen and his staff. Such acknowledgement is not always forthcoming, yet we know of nothing so calculated to secure loyal and efficient service.

A Public Library for Scarborough?—It is strange that such a progressive town as Scarborough should be without its library, but such is the case. At a recent social function, the president of the Scarborough Townsmen's Association expressed the hope that the reproach would be speedily removed. In the course of his remarks the president said that he hoped all would make up their minds that they must have, in the interests of all, young and old, a public library. Wherever he went, he said, the first thing he did was to visit the free library, to see how it was run. In the Scottish towns, more particularly, a great many had free libraries, and young working men and girls learned a great deal which enabled them to come to England and take bread out of the mouths of our own people. He felt ashamed there were not the same facilities in Scarborough.

New Branch Library at Hull.—The Hull Garden Village is to have its own public library, supported by the Hull Corporation. We were amused to notice that when considering a "Book List" attention was called to two works listed on lawn tennis, and the question gravely asked whether the ratepayers should find books for tennis players! Eventually one work was deleted.

American Children's Libraries.—Judging from the prominence that has been given to the visit of an American children's librarian to this country by various periodicals from "*The Times*" downwards, one would think that such a thing as a children's library had never existed here. The fact is, we have been far too modest in the use of our trumpets in the past. We were glad to see a letter in "*The Times*" from our president on the subject.

The Journalist and Public Libraries.—We are gratified to find in a recent issue of *The Newspaper World* an appreciation of public libraries in general, and of three in particular: the Guildhall, the Tate Library at Brixton and the Battersea Central Library. In every case stress is laid on the services rendered by the staff as well as on the excellence of the material provided for the use of the journalist in search of urgent information.

Grantham's Public Library.—A temporary building has been secured by the Grantham Public Library Committee in which to house its library and museum; the library will be opened at an early date.

Dumfries Library Rate Doubled.—In these days of economy it is refreshing to read of an authority doubling its library rate without protest. In moving that the Dumfries rate be raised from one penny to twopence Judge Smart said that "it must be a matter of great gratification that they had now the possibility of meeting their responsibility. It had been humbling in the past that they were not able to meet these responsibilities."

Sheffield's Libraries.—There has been quite a storm in the Sheffield press on the state of that city's public libraries, which are now in the course of drastic reorganisation. In the course of the discussions a good deal has been said that would have been better left unsaid, especially such wild statements as one in *The Sheffield Telegraph* to the effect that "the free libraries have become simply machines for distributing story-books and novels." And again: "The need for free libraries—except for reference books or perhaps the weightier textbooks occasionally required by students—has totally disappeared." We entirely agree that probably there has been a certain wastage in the administrative methods of Sheffield's libraries, but with every desire to approve wise economy, we should like to suggest that Sheffield is not likely to secure an efficient library system by offering £300 a year for a deputy librarian of such an important city. We know many deputy librarians and assistants in much smaller places who are receiving better remuneration.

West Riding Rural Library Scheme.—The West Riding County Council proposes to establish a county library scheme at an early date, and the matter is receiving some attention in the local press and by the rural authorities.

SUMMER SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SERVICE.

The Fifth Summer School, held at Aberystwyth, August 8th to 20th, is over, much to the regret of the 52 persons who participated in it. The beautiful surroundings and glorious weather were two big factors in its success, but the excellence of the lectures and the hospitality of Miss Tremain, the Warden of Alexandra Hall, greatly tended towards the enjoyment of the memorable 12 days.

The lecturers, who included such authorities as Messrs. Ballinger, Hutt, Quinn, Powell, Riddle and Savage, successfully combined work with pleasure, and the keenness with which the students entered for the test examination foretold the success of their efforts. An exhibition of stationery, kindly arranged by Mr. Riddle and containing examples from many libraries, proved helpful.

The afternoon lectures were held at the National Library, of which the students gained a thorough knowledge, and where practical demonstrations were given.

Excursions were arranged by Mr. Macquiston, of Dublin, to the Rheidol Valley and Devil's Bridge, Llynant Falls and Clarach Bay; he also arranged two concerts, at one of which a presentation was made to Mr. Macquiston, consisting of a walking-stick, a pipe and a tin of his favourite tobacco as a slight return for his efforts.

An appeal was made by Mr. Hutt for increased support of the Summer Schools and for the Library Association system of educational training. The Education authorities, he said, were considering on the ground of economy the withdrawal of the grant by which the schools are made possible, and it was only by increased support that the School would be possible next year.

The Aberystwyth Summer Schools may be recommended as an excellent holiday, and as an inspiring centre; all present were agreed that they would certainly come again.

F. A. RICHARDS.

 APPOINTMENTS.

Miss M. A. COOKE, librarian, Gloucestershire rural library scheme, to be rural librarian, Kent, consequent upon Mr. Duncan Gray's withdrawal. Salary £400.

*WILFRID HYNES, F.L.A., chief assistant, Cardiff Reference Library, to be librarian-in-charge, Kensal Rise. Salary £250 with house.

J. WILSON LAMBERT, F.L.A., librarian, Gainsborough, to be librarian, Eccles. Salary £292 (including bonus).

Miss C. A. MACKENZIE'S official title at Exeter is that of senior assistant, and not sub-librarian as was recorded in our last issue.

 CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

DEAR SIR,—The question as to the best kind of education and training which should be acquired by assistants who aspire to chief positions, is one of great importance. It is impossible to deal fully with it in a short letter, but I should like to refer to one or two things.

Those responsible for Rural Library Systems are the chief offenders (if offence it is) in the appointment of untrained men and women to fill Library positions. It is maintained by many, however, that a person with a good general education and of wide reading is a better person for the position than one of mediocre education, but the possessor of a few L.A. certificates and

Library experience. To a great extent I agree with them. The granting of certificates in sections 5 and 6 to juniors of 16, 17, or 18 is, I think, a serious mistake; the age limit should be 21, and assistants should be required to take the Examinations in the order of the Syllabus.

Rural Library appointments are in the hands of Education Authorities, and, naturally, much importance is attached to general educational qualifications and comparatively little to Library experience. For a recent position, the person appointed had only quite a brief library experience, but yet was preferred to candidates with infinitely wider and longer experience, and who should therefore be better qualified for the position. But other qualifications are apparently more useful to Rural Library authorities! The other matter to which I desire to call attention is the belief that a librarian is necessary for the administration of a library! This is quite a mistake, and one which should be dismissed by all aspiring assistants. A well known Library has, so far as is known publicly, been without a Librarian for some time, and I have not yet heard of its utter ruin through this omission.

Provided you have a few library clerks, any Tom, Dick, or Harry can "run" a library in his spare time, and save quite a lot of money and earn the thanks of taxpayers; or the library can now fulfil the function suggested by certain people when the Acts were first passed, *i.e.*, provide a hobby for retired journalists, authors and popular educators.

Must we conclude, then, that practical library training and professional certificates should be avoided at all costs by those who hope for success in library work?

Yours, etc.,

ANCIENT MARINER.

[We hope to comment on this letter in our next issue.—*Ed.*]

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP.

Honorary Visitor:

Sir FREDERIC GEORGE KENYON, K.C.B., P.B.A., M.A.

Director: E. A. BAKER, M.A., D.Lit.

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(b) COURSES FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS, whether day or evening.

Courses (a) and (b) are for students reading for the University Diploma in Librarianship, or for the Library Association's Certificates leading to the Association's Diploma in Librarianship.

(c) Special courses for students already engaged in Library work.

(d) Public and Special Lectures on Rural Library Systems, Library work with Children, Commercial and Technical Libraries, and Library Extension Work will be given during the session.

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